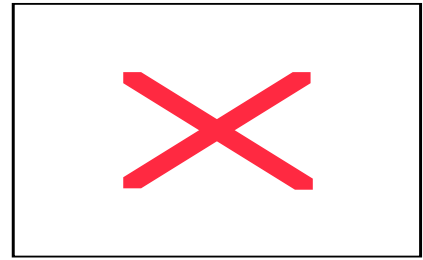


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NOAA Investigating fishing net snagged on *USS Monitor*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) is working with the National Marine Sanctuary Program to investigate the origin of a trawl fishing net found snagged on the remains of the Civil War ironclad *USS Monitor*.

The net was discovered by Navy divers and NOAA archaeologists during an expedition to *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary (NMS) between June 17-30. The NOAA-Navy team also discovered that the *Monitor's* lower hull had suffered considerable damage since it was last visited and documented in August 2003. *Monitor* NMS is managed by NOAA, an agency of the Department of Commerce.

"We did not expect a trawl net to be found snagged on the remains of the *Monitor*, as trawling is illegal in the sanctuary," said Special Agent Joe Wilson, NOAA Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) – Southeast Division. "There is a one-mile diameter national marine sanctuary around the *Monitor*, which is clearly marked on official nautical charts."

Sanctuary regulations prohibit trawling inside the sanctuary. Sanctuary regulations also prohibit moving, removing or injuring, or any attempt to move, remove, or injure any submerged cultural or historical resources, including artifacts and pieces from shipwrecks, without a permit.

"The discovery of the net on the *Monitor* is of great concern, as is the recent damage to the ironclad's hull," said *Monitor* NMS Manager John Broadwater. "Large sections of the *Monitor* that had yet to be fully studied by archaeologists are simply gone."

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While the investigation is underway, NOAA Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement is requesting anyone with information about the source of the fishing net and/or recent damage to the *Monitor* to contact the law enforcement hotline: **800-853-1964**.

Regulations for *Monitor* NMS can be found on the web at:
<http://www.sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov/oms/pdfs/MonitorRegs.pdf>

NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources through scientific research, management, enforcement and the conservation of marine mammals and other protected marine species and their habitat.

NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP), which manages *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary, seeks to increase the public awareness of America's maritime heritage by conducting scientific research, monitoring, exploration and educational programs. Today, the sanctuary program manages 13 national marine sanctuaries and one coral reef ecosystem reserve that encompass more than 150,000 square miles of America's ocean and Great Lakes natural and cultural resources.

NOAA is committed to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

[NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program:](http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov)

<http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

[Monitor National Marine Sanctuary: http://www.monitor.noaa.gov](http://www.monitor.noaa.gov)